

# Production, handling, processing, utilization and marketing of milk in the Mid Rift Valley of Ethiopia

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## Abstract

The study was conducted in purposively selected districts of East Shoa and West Arsi Zones of Oromia Regional State, Ethiopia by selecting 150 dairy owning households using structured questionnaire to identify milk production, handling, processing, dairy products utilization and marketing system.

The results of the study show that the overall average holding of milking cows per household in the study area were 1.92±0.09. Among 40% of the farmers holding crossbred dairy cows the majority were farmers of peri-urban area. Cow milk production was the major activity as a source of food and income in the area. However, small amount of milk was produced from goat and sheep. Hygienic practices during milking were found to be better as compared to other similar studies done in the past. About 52.7% and 10.3% of farmers were washing udder of their cows before and after milking respectively. Different plant materials were used for cleaning and smoking of milking and storing utensils to increase the shelf life of milk. Milk was traditionally processed to convert it into more stable products like traditional butter (Kibe), buttermilk (Amera), cottage cheese (Ayib) and whey (Aguat). These milk products were consumed by the farmers in addition to fresh liquid milk. Milk and milk products were sold both through formal and informal market. Milk was sold both by rural (crop-livestock mixed) and peri-urban farmers in the area. The amount sold was higher for the peri-urban farmers than the rural farmers.

**Key words:** crop-livestock mixed, dairy, peri-urban, production system, rural

## Introduction

Ethiopia is believed to have the largest livestock population in Africa. Despite its huge population, the livestock subsector in the country is less productive in general, and compared to its potential, the direct contribution to the national economy is limited (Kedija et al 2008; Sintayehu et al 2008). Consequently, the national milk production and the overall milk consumption in Ethiopia are very low, even compared with other least developed African countries (Zegeye 2003; Melesse K and Beyene F 2009). Per capita consumption of milk in the country is as low as 17 kg per head while the average figure for Africa is 26 kg per head (Gebrewold et al 1998).

Dairy production, among the sector of livestock production systems, is a critical issue in Ethiopia where livestock and its products are important sources of food and income, and dairying has not been fully exploited and promoted in the country (Sintayehu et al 2008). Due to the pivotal role that dairy production plays in the economy of the country as well as the enhancement of the nutritional status of the citizens, development of the sector is crucial. To be effective, the efforts to improve the productivity of smallholder dairy production and improve its market orientation needs to be supported and informed by detailed understanding of the current and dynamic conditions of production, marketing, processing and

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